

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1182
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, FI, NO
SUBJECT: FINNISH-NORWEGIAN DIFFERENCES OVER SECURITY SURFACE IN
NORDIC COUNCIL

REF: (A) HELSINKI 554, (B) HELSINKI 384

1. SUMMARY: FINNISH-NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY DEBATE WAS
DRAMATICALLY INTRODUCED INTO NORDIC COUNCIL MARCH 31 WHEN
FINNISH COMMUNIST PARTY (SKP) LEADER AND NORWEGIAN POLITICIANS
EXCHANGED POINTED REMARKS ON ISSUE. DRAMA WAS HEIGHTENED BY
UNEXPECTED PRESENCE OF PRESIDENT KEKKONEN. MATTER RECEIVED HEAVY
COVERAGE IN FINNISH MEDIA, INCLUDING GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE
EDITORIAL COMMENT. MEDIA RESERVATIONS CENTERED ON APPROPRIATE-
NESS OF DISCUSSING QUESTION IN NORDIC COUNCIL AND ON MANNER IN
WHICH IT RAISED. END SUMMARY

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2. DESPITE STATEMENTS BY GOF AND NORWEGIAN PRIME MINISTER NORDLI
BEFOREHAND THAT FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY MATTERS WERE NOT
APPROPRIATE SUBJECTS FOR NORDIC COUNCIL, DELEGATES WHO GATHERED
FOR 25TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING IN HELSINKI MARCH 31 TO APRIL 3
WERE AWARE THAT FINNISH-NORWEGIAN EXCHANGES ON SUBJECT OF
NORWEGIAN NATO TIES (REFTELS) WERE LIKELY TO COLOR COUNCIL

DEBATES. NORDLI EXPRESSED WISH BEFORE SESSION THAT THERE BE NO DISCUSSION OF ISSUE, WHICH HE SAID STEMMED NOT FROM ANY INCIDENT BUT WAS AN "INVENTION OF THE PRESS." FINLAND'S PRIME MINISTER MIETTUNEN SOUGHT TO DAMPEN ISSUE IN HIS SPEECH AT OPENING SESSION MARCH 31 WHEN HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH COUNCIL IS FORUM FOR FREE DEBATE OF MEMBER STATES COMMON AFFAIRS, IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT MEMBERS' INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS TO SECURITY NEEDS "DO NOT BELONG" ON THE AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL. HE REFERRED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS PRINCIPLE BY THEN PRIME MINISTER KEKKONEN AT TIME OF FINNISH ENTRY INTO NORDIC COUNCIL 21 YEARS AGO.

3. HOPES FOR AVOIDING ISSUE WERE DASHED EARLY THAT AFTERNOON WHEN SKP CHAIRMAN AARNE SAARINEN MADE IT MAIN FOCUS OF HIS SPEECH. SAARINEN CONCEDED FINNS IN 1955 HAD REQUESTED THAT SECURITY POLICY NOT BE DISCUSSED AT COUNCIL, BUT WENT ON TO ASSERT THAT "LIMITATION EXCLUDES EXAMINATION OF THESE MATTERS BUT PERMITS, NEVERTHELESS, A DEBATE." HE THEN RECITED FINLAND'S EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF PEACE AND SECURITY AND REFERRED TO 1948 FRIENDSHIP PACT BETWEEN FINLAND AND USSR. HE SAID UNFAIR ARTICLES IN NORWEGIAN PRESS HAVE INSULTED FINNS AND CAUSED ATMOSPHERE OF NORDIC COOPERATION TO DETERIORATE. HE ADDED THAT PRESENCE OF FRG TROOPS IN NORWEGIAN EXERCISES CONSTITUTES SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN NORWEGIAN POLICY AND GIVES REASON FOR CONCERN IN FINLAND.

4. SAARINEN'S REMARKS WERE MADE TO FULL ASSEMBLY INCLUDING PRESIDENT KEKKONEN WHO HAD BEEN CENTRALLY INVOLVED IN NATO ISSUE AND WHO BY INTRIGUING COINCIDENCE CHOSE AFTERNOON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SESSION TO PAY UNUSUAL VISIT TO NORDIC COUNCIL.

5. TRYGVE BRATTELI ASKED FOR TIME TO REPLY TO SAARINEN BEFORE NEXT SCHEDULED SPEAKER. BRATTELI SAID POINTEDLY NORWEGIANS KNOW THAT FINNISH FOREIGN POLICY IS DECIDED IN HELSINKI AND CONCLUDED IT EQUALLY OBVIOUS THAT NORWEGIAN FOREIGN POLICY IS MADE IN OSLO ALONE. HE ADDED THAT GON NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR NORWEGIAN PRESS.

6. FOLLOWING SCHEDULED SPEECH BY DENMARK'S PRIME MINISTER JORGENSEN WHO DID NOT MENTION CONTROVERSY, NORWEGIAN HOYRE PARTY CHIEF WILLOCH TOOK ROSTRUM AND EXPRESSED REGRET THAT NORDIC SECURITY HAD BEEN RAISED BY SAARINEN. HE SAID ISSUE DIFFERENT FROM QUESTION OF EARLIER DISCUSSION OF ICELANDIC FISHING CONFLICT BECAUSE ICELAND HAD ITSELF ASKED FOR THAT DISCUSSION. HE SAID SAARINEN'S MENTION OF NORWEGIAN PRESS CRITICISM IN CONNECTION WITH KEKKONEN'S 1976 VISIT TEMPTED HIM TO USE STRONG WORDS. HE REJECTED IDEA THAT RIGHTIST GROUPS IN NORWAY, INCLUDING HIS OWN, AGITATE HATRED AGAINST USSR AND

WORK FOR SHARPENING OF NORWAY'S SECURITY POSITION. HE EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT ANYBODY COULD SERIOUSLY REGARD ACTIVITIES IN NORWAY AS THREAT AGAINST ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

7. PRESIDENT KEKKONEN ROSE AND LEFT SESSION AT END OF WILLOCH'S SPEECH. OF SUBSEQUENT SPEAKERS AT COUNCIL SESSIONS, ONLY ONE FINN AND TWO NORWEGIANS AGAIN RAISED NORWEGIAN SECURITY ISSUE. FINNISH LIBERAL PARTY CHAIRMAN PEKKA TARJANNE, SPEAKING IN NORWEGIAN, SAID THAT RIGHT EXISTS TO "COMMENT ON ALL TIMELY NORDIC PROBLEMS DURING COUNCIL GENERAL DEBATE," INCLUDING FINNISH-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS, WITHOUT INTERFERING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF COUNTRY CONCERNED. HOWEVER, HE CRITICIZED SAARINEN FOR RAISING PROBLEMS IN PROVOCATIVE LANGUAGE. NORWEGIAN LEFTIST SOCIALIST REIDAGELARSEN AGREED WITH SAARINEN THAT THERE HAS BEEN CHANGE IN NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY. NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENT SPEAKER HANSEN CRITICIZED SAARINEN, POINTING OUT THAT RESTRAINTS ON DEBATE IN NORDIC COUNCIL ARE DUE TO FINNISH 1955 POSITION AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAID IF FINLAND WISHES TO CHANGE RULES THEN IT MUST BE PREPARED

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TO DISCUSS NOT ONLY NORWAY BUT ALSO, HE IMPLIED, INSTALLATIONS ON KOLA PENINSULA. A FEW OTHER SPEAKERS, INCLUDING FINLAND'S CONSERVATIVE PARTY CHIEF HOLKERI, ONLY ALLUDED TO ISSUE, SAYING THAT THEY THOUGHT DISCUSSION WAS INAPPROPRIATE. NORDLI, UNLIKE OTHER FOUR PRIMINS, WAS NOT SCHEDULED TO SPEAK IN GENERAL DEBATE.

8. NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND ADDRESSED ISSUE OUTSIDE OF COUNCIL SESSIONS WHEN HE SPOKE TO MEETING OF NORDIC CLUB IN HELSINKI SUBURB. HE INDICATED NORWAY DOES NOT CONSIDER POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF FRG TROOPS IN NATO MANEUVERS IN NORWAY AS CONSTITUTING CHANGE IN NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY. HE EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT THERE IS UNDERSTANDING AMONG NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, EVEN SOVIET UNION, THAT NORWAY'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND NORWAY'S SELF-IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS ON ITS EXERCISE OF THIS MEMBERSHIP FORM PART OF GENERAL BALANCE IN NORDIC AREA. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT 30 YEARS AFTER END OF WORLD WAR II, IT TIME TO

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NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH NATO PARTNER, THE FRG; SUCH NORMALIZATION NOT A QUESTION OF ANY SPECIAL BILATERAL ROLE FOR FRG. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING IT IN NATIONAL INTEREST OF NORWAY THAT SECURITY POLICY PEACE IS PRESERVED IN NORTH AND THAT CONFIDENCE IN BALANCE DOES NOT DIMINISH.

9. AS IN PREVIOUS INSTANCES IN WHICH THIS MATTER HAS BEEN DISCUSSED PUBLICLY, FINNISH PRESS HAS BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF GOF POSITION. COMMUNIST KANSAN UUTISET DEALT, RATHER UNCOMFORTABLY, WITH APPARENT DILEMMA OF A FINNISH DELEGATE TO NORDIC COUNCIL RAISING A MATTER OF SECURITY POLICY WHEN IT HAD BEEN FINNISH INITIATIVE TO RESTRICT NORDIC COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF SUCH MATTERS. KANSAN UUTISET CONCLUDED THAT WHILE IT IS BASIC POINT THAT NORDIC COUNCIL AVOIDS DEALING WITH FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY MATTERS IT IS NOT OUT OF ORDER TO REFER TO SUCH QUESTIONS AT THE GENERAL SESSIONS; SUCH DEBATE, ACCORDING TO KANSAN UUTISET, DOES NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO DISTURB THE ORDINARY TASK OF THE COUNCIL: REALIZATION OF NORDIC COOPERATION. OTHER NEWSPAPERS, WHILE QUESTIONING PROPRIETY OF RAISING ISSUE IN NORDIC COUNCIL AND CRITICIZING THE MANNER IN WHICH SAARINEN INTRODUCED THE ISSUE, NEVERTHELESS TENDED TO CONCLUDE THAT IN FINAL ANALYSIS IT WAS SUBJECT WHICH HAD TO BE DISCUSSED, REGARDLESS OF PROCEDURAL INCONVENIENCES. SWEDISH-LANGUAGE HUFVUDSTADSBLADET, HOWEVER, WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL BOTH OF SAARINEN'S RAISING THE ISSUE AS WELL AS THE INTEMPERANCE OF HIS REMARKS. HUFVUDSTADSBLADET SAID SIMILAR STATEMENT MADE AGAINST FINLAND WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE TO FINNS, AND BY SAME CRITERIA SAARINEN'S STATEMENTS OUT OF PLACE.

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10. COMMENT: MANY FINNS MAY SHARE HELSINGIN SANOMAT
CONCLUSION THAT IT IS NOW PERHAPS TIME FOR HELSINKI AND OSLO
EACH TO CONCENTRATE ON THEIR OWN NATIONAL PROBLEMS. IT REMAINS
TO BE SEEN HOWEVER WHETHER THIS STILL UNRESOLVED DIFFERENCE
OF PERSPECTIVE BETWEEN THE TWO NORDIC COUNTRIES WILL BE PER-
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MITTED TO LIE DORMANT. ALSO, PRECEDENT OF CRITICIZING MEMBER
COUNTRY SECURITY POLICY AT NORDIC COUNCIL SESSION IS ONE THAT
COULD COME BACK TO HAUNT FINLAND AT SOME FUTURE DATE.
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